



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A STUDY IN THE CORRECTION OF DIALECTIC ENGLISH

DANIEL W. REDMOND
College of the City of New York

As most of the readers of the *English Journal* are aware, the National Council of English Teachers voted, at a recent meeting, to recommend that more time than has hitherto been given to it be devoted to the teaching of oral English. Some of the problems to be met by this new effort may be difficult to describe, but at least one of them, the existence of dialect forms, is clearly apparent to any well-trained ear and is becoming more conspicuous with each class that enters college.

In the early stages of our collegiate history the majority of our college students were descended from English-speaking stock. Variations in pronunciation were so slight as to be of comparatively little importance; in fact, they were often looked upon as something desirable. But with the shift in the center of immigration to this country there came new speech influences. All the European languages and many of the Asiatic tongues are found. The distribution varies in different sections: in some of the North Middle states the Scandinavian prevails, in the Eastern states the influences are mainly Germanic and Slavic, with an increasing Italian, and (for New England) Italian and French, element.

Fortunate economic development has brought about the rapid advancement of the children of the foreign born to high schools and colleges, and the addition to their number of many students offering, for college entrance, preparation in foreign preparatory schools has already made the problem of English pronunciation a clearly defined one. Add to those groups mentioned the students of English-speaking stock who have a lisp or some other remediable defect and the problem assumes still larger proportions.

The purpose of this article is to outline the problem in some detail and to show to how great an extent it has, in specific instances, been overcome. A description of the method of treatment should

logically follow, but space will not permit that. In New York City, where the composition of the population is very complex, the difficulty of dialectic English is met in its most conspicuous form. We have maintained at the College of the City of New York, for a number of years, separate classes for those students who show, at the beginning of their Freshman year, marked inability to pronounce or articulate English accurately. The Freshman class is subjected to an oral test, and those showing dialectic errors or other conspicuous defects are grouped in separate sections. These students are not allowed to go on with work in oral English until they have acquired a reasonable degree of accuracy.

The time allotted for this training is one hour each week. The actual time of instruction exclusive of holidays, examinations, and other interruptions was, in the case of the two groups reported in the accompanying table, twelve recitation hours. The time which elapsed between the beginning of the course and the end was 14 weeks. The accompanying table presents the record of two groups of students. The table is an actual transcription of the instructor's class record. No attempt has been made to change or qualify the result. Ordinary type has been substituted for the phonetic script because of the difficulty of printing and reading the phonetic symbols. This may involve some slight loss in accuracy of representing the sounds produced.

Some objection may be found to the printing of individual records. This appears like a detailed and laborious process, but the problem is an individual one and cannot safely be treated in any other way. A summary will be subject to all the errors that arise from an attempt to generalize upon cases that are in many particulars unlike. In the consideration of some sounds there are enough elements in common to permit grouping; in other sounds the variations are so many that an accurate description would be merely another form of presenting the table without the advantage of appeal to the eye.

Among the variations that may be grouped are the changes of initial *th* to *d* (them : dem). Among the twenty-three students whose cases we have considered here eleven were found who had this habit at the beginning of the term and five still had it at the

GROUP I*

Defects during Term	Defects in Examination	Errors in Term and Examination	Errors in Examination	Percentage of Errors Corrected	Disposition of Case
1. <i>d</i> low (under:undher); <i>th:t</i> or <i>d</i> (them:dem); <i>i:e</i> (pin:peen); <i>a:e</i> (ambition:embition).	<i>a:e</i> (embition); <i>t</i> low.	6	2	66	P
2. <i>v:w</i> (vase:wase); <i>a:e</i> (battle:betel); <i>e:a</i> (revange); <i>i:e</i> (it:et), lisp.	<i>i:e</i> ; <i>a:e</i> ; lisp.	5	3	40	F
3. General slurring; positions correct.	Some thickness; generally good.	.....	.....	.....	P
4. <i>z:s</i> (haz:has); <i>th:d</i> (dem); <i>ng</i> linked; <i>r</i> guttural, lisp; <i>a:e</i> (lamp:lemp).	<i>z:s</i> ; <i>th:d</i> ; <i>ng</i> linked; <i>a:e</i> .	6	4	33	F
5. Decided stammer; <i>l</i> guttural; <i>v:f</i> (have:haf).	No stammer; <i>v:f</i> .	3	1	66	P
6. <i>a:e</i> (can:ken); <i>v:f</i> (have:haf); <i>th:d</i> (this:dis); <i>oi</i> close; <i>ng</i> linked.	<i>ng</i> linked; <i>a:e</i> ; <i>th</i> doubtful.	5	3	40	F
7. Lisp; <i>th:d</i> (them:dem).	Lisp in some cases; correct in most.	2	1	50	P
8. <i>t:th</i> (mat:math); <i>ng</i> linked; <i>z:s</i> (waz:was); <i>r</i> guttural; <i>t:d</i> (at:ad); <i>a:e</i> (hat:het).	All consonants correct; one vowel error (<i>a:e</i>).	6	1	83	P
9. Lisp; <i>v:f</i> (stove:stofe).	<i>v:f</i> .	2	1	50	P
10. <i>s:z</i> ; <i>r</i> guttural; <i>ng</i> linked; <i>v:w</i> ; ungrammatical.	(hood:hude); <i>k:g</i> ; <i>g:ch</i> ; omits <i>h</i> ; <i>a:e</i> .	9	4	55	F
11. <i>s:z</i> ; <i>th:d</i> ; <i>r</i> guttural; <i>e:a</i> (man:men); <i>ng</i> linked.	.....	5	0	100	P
12. Lisp; <i>th:v</i> (with:wiv).	Slight lisp.	2	.....	50	P
13. <i>th:d</i> ; <i>d:t</i> ; <i>ng:nk</i> ; <i>v:w</i> .	<i>e:a</i> ; <i>a:e</i> ; <i>t:th</i> ; <i>th:d</i> .	7	3	57	F

GROUP II

1. <i>th:d</i> ; <i>ers:uz</i> ; lisp; guttural <i>r</i> .	<i>th:d</i> ; <i>e(a)r:oi</i> (hoid); one <i>s</i> lisped.	5	3	40	F
2. <i>th:d</i> ; <i>-r:-oi</i> (woild); <i>ng</i> linked.	All corrected.	3	0	100	P
3. <i>t:th</i> (hat:hath); <i>ng</i> linked; final <i>d:t</i> (bad:bat).	<i>th:d</i> .	4	1	75	P
4. <i>th:d</i> ; Italian <i>r</i> ; <i>th:t</i> ; blade <i>s</i> ; omits <i>h</i> .	<i>th:d</i> ; omits <i>h</i> .	5	2	60	P
5. <i>a:e</i> ; <i>ng</i> defective.	Absent from examination	.....	.....	.....	.....
6. <i>th:d</i> ; <i>a:e</i> ; slight lisp.	Lisp; <i>th:d</i> habitual.	3	2	33	F
7. Decided lisp.	Lisp still marked.	1	1	0	F
8. (doubly:dahbly); <i>b:p</i> ; <i>th:t</i> ; <i>up:ahp</i> ; <i>ng:ngk</i> ; <i>a:e</i> .	<i>e:a</i> ; <i>all:ohl</i> .	7	2	71	P
9. <i>th:d</i> ; <i>r</i> guttural; final <i>d:t</i> ; <i>z:s</i> ; <i>v:f</i> ; <i>g:ch</i> (charge:charch).	<i>r</i> guttural; <i>ng</i> linked; <i>a:e</i> ; <i>th:d</i> ; <i>g:ch</i> .	6	6	0	F
10. <i>th:d</i> ; <i>ng</i> linked.	<i>ng</i> linked.	2	1	50†	P

*The difficulty of representing sounds accurately by ordinary type must not be overlooked, but the phonetic symbols present greater difficulties for the average reader.

†Passed in spite of low percentage because only one error remained.

end, though with lessening frequency. In six cases guttural *r*, or Continental *r* as it is sometimes called, was habitual at the beginning, while only one use of it remained at the end. Four students changed *v* to *f* at the beginning, while the habit remained in two cases at the end. The difficulty of obtaining results where there is no tactual impression to serve as a guide is shown in the interchange of *e* and *a* (revange). Seven students had this difficulty at the beginning, and seven had it at the end. The remaining errors do not admit of classification, but appear in the table.

The first column of the table contains a list of all the errors noted during the term and the second column contains a list of all the errors noted in the examination, or test, given at the end of the term. The thoroughness of the final test is shown by the fact that in some cases (e.g., cases 10 and 13, Group I) errors were detected in the test which either did not appear or were not detected during the term.

In Group I seven out of thirteen students were brought, in twelve recitation hours, from habitually bad dialectic English to fairly accurate habits of pronunciation. In Group II five out of nine (excluding case 5) obtained the same good results. It is reasonably safe to say that the improvement is permanent. This conclusion is borne out by a study of about nine hundred cases of men who have completed the four-year college course. Rarely do the men revert to earlier dialect habits though there are a few cases in which this reversion has occurred. No particular merit is claimed for this work except that it meets the conditions that confront us and overcomes our difficulty in this one matter of dialect. The plan is readily adaptable to the local conditions of any college or school, and if carefully applied in all cases would result in raising considerably the standard of accuracy in oral English.